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10/501,241	09/15/2004	Pietro Armanini	120364	5324

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EXAMINER

BEAUCHAINE, MARK J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3653

DATE MAILED: 07/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 and 4-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over European Patent Application Number EP 0.967.581 A2 by Katou et al (hereinafter "Katou") published 29 December 1999. The bill machine disclosed by Katou incorporates deposit withdrawal port 2, transport path 501, discriminating unit 3, recycle box 8, temporary storage box 4 and reject box 9 that read on the Applicant's input and output, transport system, detection system, recycling store, recirculation store and unfit bill store, respectively. Furthermore, said temporary storage box 4 of Katou accepts bills found to be fit by discriminating unit 3 and ultimately discharges said bills for recirculation upon a subsequent transaction (page 5, lines 24 plus). Still further, Katou discloses the step of transporting bills from temporary storage box 4 to discriminating unit 3, and upon the generation of a bill rejection, said bill is transported to reject box 9 (page 8, lines 49 plus).

Although Katou fails to disclose the step of transporting bills to temporary box 4 (*cf.* Applicant's recirculation store) based upon a determination that said bills are unfit for use in recycle box 8 (*cf.* Applicant's recycling store), it would have been obvious to

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one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to distribute bills to the recycle box 8, temporary box 4 and reject box 9 based upon various levels of fitness of said bills to cause unacceptable bills to be taken out of circulation and to cause useable bills of high quality to be reused by said bill machine, and for useable bills of low quality to be transported out of said machine into circulation rather than be used again by said machine and create a possibility of jamming said machine.

Regarding claims 4 and 7, the recycle box 8 of Katou is shown to be a self-contained cassette (see Figure 3). Such interchangeable cassettes used in bill apparatus are well known in the art and are commonly known by one of ordinary skill to be removable, and interchangeable with other bill machines, to provide apparatus operators with an effective means of inserting and withdrawing stacks of money to and from said apparatus to maintain said machines with appropriate amounts of currency.

Regarding claims 5, 6 and 9, the use of bins (claims 5 and 6) and secure housings (claims 9) in bill machines are common means of securely containing bills processed by said machines and would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to provide an effective means of securely containing bills processed.

Regarding claim 8, Katou further discloses discriminating unit 3 as discriminating bills by type (page 8, lines 39 plus) which indicates the process of denominating bills.

Regarding claim 10 Katou further discloses withdrawal box 7 that reads on the Applicant's output store. Furthermore, said withdrawal box 7 is in direct communication with the discriminating unit 3 via transportation path 501 (page 4, lines 34 plus).

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Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katou as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Patent Number 6,128,402 by Jones et al (hereinafter "Jones"). Although Katou fails to disclose the step of non-genuine bills being returned to the deposit withdrawal port 2, the operation of returning counterfeit bills to a user is well known in the currency apparatus art. Jones teaches a currency processing system that accepts bills via bill deposit receptacle 1 and scans said bills via module 8. "When a bill cannot be recognized . . . the unidentified bill [is directed] to the return slot 2 so that it can be removed from the machine by the customer." Furthermore, "[b]ills that are detected to be counterfeit are treated in the same manner as the unrecognized bills." (Column 8, lines 46 plus.) It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to incorporate the counterfeit bill return feature of Jones into the bill machine of Katou to provide an effective means of preventing counterfeit bills from being processed by said machine and cheating the machine owner of subsequent users of said machine.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katou as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Patent Number 4,625,870 by Nao et al (hereinafter "Nao"). Although Katou fails to disclose the deposit withdrawal port 2 as having separate openings, the use of individual deposit and return openings in currency processing apparatus is well known in the art. Nao teaches a bill handling apparatus that incorporates bill insertion opening 6 and bill disbursing opening 3 that read on the Applicant's input and output openings, respectively. It would have been obvious to one

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of ordinary skill to incorporate the separate openings of Nao into the bill machine of Katou to provide an effective means of allowing a user to both deposit and receive bills simultaneously.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katou as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Patent Number 4,587,408 by Watanabe (hereinafter "Watanabe"). Although Katou fails to disclose the bill machine as a teller assist machine, the use of currency machines to assist tellers is well known in the art. Watanabe teaches a currency apparatus 1 that is "disposed between a pair of tables 2 for a couple of teller's use." (See column 2, lines 63 plus and Figure 1.) Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to install the bill machine of Katou into a bank setting to assist a teller in processing currency during bank operation.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 20 April 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The Applicant's assertion the discriminating unit 3 of European Patent Application Number EP 0.967.581 A2 by Katou et al ("Katou") published 29 December 1999 does not perform any fitness determination (Applicant's response page 2, lines 6-8) is incorrect. By virtue of the function of a discriminating unit determining banknote characteristics and directing said banknotes to a plurality of destinations based on said characteristics a discriminating unit performs a fitness determination. Furthermore, a broad interpretation of a "fitness" determination includes a determination of what is

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proper or suitable for a particular purpose or environment. Thus, the discriminating unit 3 of Katou reads on the Applicant's fitness detection of claim 1.

Furthermore, the operation of recycle box 8 of Katou that is designated for "both deposit and withdrawal" (page 4, line 24) reads on the Applicant's recycling store withdrawal operation of claim 1.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark J. Beauchaine whose telephone number is (571)272-6934. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00AM through 5:00PM Mondays through Thursdays.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eileen Lillis can be reached on (571)272-6928. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

mjb



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PRIMARY EXAMINER